

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

- 5 1. A wireless handheld device for requesting, receiving and storing contact information, said apparatus comprising:
- (a) a transceiver for wireless communications;
 - (b) a user interface;
 - (c) a data storage device; and
 - 10 (d) a processor operatively coupled to the transceiver, the user interface and the data storage device, for running an embedded electronic address book and for executing other computer-executable process steps,
- wherein the wireless handheld device is programmed to: (i) input via the
- 15 user interface a unique contact identifier that uniquely identifies a desired contact record, (ii) generate a request message that includes the unique contact identifier and is addressed to a central hub that maintains and distributes contact information, (iii) transmit the request message using the transceiver, (iv) receive the requested contact record, and (v) store the received contact record for
- 20 access by the embedded electronic address book,
- wherein the received contact record includes plural different contact information fields and is in a format that permits unambiguous identification of said plural different contact information fields upon application of pre-specified mechanical rules stored by the wireless handheld device.
- 25 2. A wireless handheld device according to claim 1, wherein the user interface comprises a telephone keypad.
3. A wireless handheld device according to claim 1, further
- 30 programmed to display the contact record prior to storing it in the embedded electronic address book.
4. A wireless handheld device according to claim 3, further programmed to provide a user, via the user interface, with the option of whether

to store the contact record, and then to store the contact record only if so indicated by the user.

5 5. A wireless handheld device according to claim 1, wherein the unique contact identifier also includes a verification code for confirming that the requested contact record is valid.

10 6. A wireless handheld device according to claim 1, wherein the unique contact identifier comprises a telephone number in the desired contact record.

15 7. A wireless handheld device according to claim 1, further programmed to input an audio message via the user interface and to store at least one of the audio message or indicia of the audio message in association with the contact record.

20 8. A wireless handheld device according to claim 7, further programmed with speech recognition capabilities to recognize when the audio message is spoken and, in response, to retrieve at least a portion of the contact record.

25 9. A wireless handheld device according to claim 8, further programmed to automatically dial a telephone number in the contact record upon recognition that the audio message has been spoken.

 10. A wireless handheld device according to claim 1, wherein the format of the received contact record matches a native format of the embedded electronic address book.

30 11. A system for requesting, receiving and storing contact information, said system comprising:

- (a) a handheld device having:
 - (i) a user interface,
 - (ii) a data storage device,

(iii) a first communication port, and
 (iv) a first processor operatively coupled to the user interface,
 the data storage device and the first communication port, for
 running an embedded electronic address book and for
 5 executing other computer-executable process steps, and
 (b) a main computer having:
 (i) a second communication port,
 (ii) a network interface to interface with a communications
 network, and
 10 (iii) a second processor operatively coupled to the second
 communication port and the network interface, for executing
 computer-executable process steps,
 wherein the handheld device is programmed to input a unique contact
 identifier via the user interface and to store the unique contact identifier into the
 15 data storage device,
 wherein the handheld device and the main computer are programmed so
 that, after connecting the first communication port to the second communication
 port, automatically upon a user activation: (1) the unique contact identifier is
 transferred from the data storage device of the handheld device to the main
 20 computer, (2) the main computer generates a message requesting a contact
 record corresponding to the unique contact identifier and addressed to a central
 hub that maintains and distributes contact information, and transmits the
 message over the communications network via the network interface, (3) the
 main computer receives the requested contact record, (4) the main computer
 25 transfers the received contact record to the handheld unit, and (5) the handheld
 unit stores the contact record for use by its embedded electronic address book,
 and
 wherein the received contact record includes plural different contact
 information fields and is in a format that permits unambiguous identification of
 30 said plural different contact information fields upon application of pre-specified
 mechanical rules stored by at least one of the handheld device and the main
 computer.

12. A system according to claim 11, wherein the handheld device further includes a transceiver for wireless communications.

13. A system according to claim 11, wherein the user interface
5 comprises a telephone keypad

14. A system according to claim 11, wherein the unique contact identifier comprises a telephone number in the desired contact record.

10 15. A system according to claim 11, wherein the unique contact identifier also includes a verification code for confirming that the requested contact record is correct.

16. A system according to claim 11, wherein the handheld device is
15 further programmed to input an audio message via the user interface and to store at least one of the audio message or indicia of the audio message in association with the contact record.

17. A system according to claim 16, wherein the handheld device is
20 further programmed with speech recognition capabilities to recognize when the audio message is spoken and, in response, to retrieve at least a portion of the contact record.